

struts 49,50 carrying the valve structure 12 being oriented proximally toward the first end 13 of the prosthesis 10. The repeating, uniform design of the support structure 11 of the illustrative embodiment advantageously provides better structural stability, compressibility/expandability, and overall integrity than a support structure that does that comprise a non-uniform, non-repeating frame pattern.

Page 22, paragraph beginning on line 28, amend to read:

-- FIG. 18 depicts an embodiment having generally, but not absolutely parallel longitudinal attachment struts 49,50 which slightly converge toward the distal end 14 of the prosthesis 10 (and are spaced more distant from each other than the embodiment of FIGs. 13-14. The commissural bends 27,28 and distal bends 82 interconnect the longitudinal attachment struts and form a closed cell 92 as in the embodiment of FIGs. 13-16. The distal attachment struts 51,52 provide the interconnection between the opposite closed cells 92 as well as the distal portion 76 of the attachment pathway 74. They also carry a lateral arm ~~93~~ 94 and together comprise the lateral support structure ~~83,84~~ 53,54 that provide longitudinal support/stabilization and leaflet protection. The embodiment of FIG. 18 lacks proximal support arms 77,78 of the embodiment of FIGs. 13-16.

Page 23, paragraph beginning on line ¹⁰~~18~~, amend to read:

-- The illustrative support structure 11 in FIGs. 9, 11, 13-18 is not critical to achieve the optimal leaflet angles in the valve structure 12 for creating larger pockets, as depicted. For example, the attachment pathway 74 of the valve structure 12 can comprise an attachment to an outside support frame to form the illustrative configuration with the frame 32 that is not necessarily extending along the outer edges 39 of the leaflets 60,61, but rather attached to selected strut that cross the attachment pathway 74, especially along the distal portion 76 of the pathway. Furthermore, at least a portion of the outer edges 39 can be directly affixed to the vessel wall (such as being sutured, heat welded, or anchored with barbs, adhesives, etc.) with the frame 11 being absent or reinforcing or shaping only a limited portion of the leaflet outer edges 39, thus allowing for the vein to naturally collapse (at least partially) when not filled with blood. In the example depicted in FIG. 21, the frame 11 comprises a partial support 98 of a hair-pin configuration that includes a proximal bend about each commissure 27,28 with free-ended longitudinal attachment struts 49,50 extending therefrom which help

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